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LETTER DATED 31 OCTOBER 1995 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the article published in The New York Times on 29 October 1995 and a transcript from British Television Channel 4, testifying to the violations of the Security Council arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia by the Bosnian Muslims and Republic of Croatia respectively.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex I

U.S. Cooling Ties to Croatia After Winking at Its Buildup

By ROGER COHEN

ZAGREB, Croatia, Oct. 26 — On March 24, 1994, Gojko Susak, the Croatian Defense Minister, wrote to the Pentagon appealing for assistance. "Our goal," he wrote, was the peaceful transition of the Croatian military "to one which follows the model of the United States."

The Croatian Army sorely needed help. Hammered by the Serbs in 1991, battered by the Muslim-led Bosnian Army in 1993, its brief history was one of failure. But the United Nations arms embargo imposed in 1991 on the former Yugoslavia made direct military assistance illegal.

Mr. Susak's request was referred to a company called Military Professional Resources Inc., based in Alexandria, Va., and run by a group of retired American officers. "This," said Ed Soyster, a retired lieutenant-general and one the company's vice-presidents, "is the greatest corporate assemblage of military expertise in the world."

Just what has been done with that American expertise, and whether any infringement of the arms embargo may be involved, is not entirely clear. The American generals say they have done no more than teach leadership skills and advise the Croats on the role of an army.

Nonetheless, the Croatian Army, which has also made large clandestine purchases of heavy weapons, mainly in eastern Europe, was quickly transformed into the most effective proven fighting force in the region. And the role of the retired American generals in that transformation has become one element in the increasingly troubled web of relations between the United States and Croatia.

"Croatia became our de facto strategic ally," said a State Depart-

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U.S. Is Now Cooling Its Ties to Croatia,

Continued From Page 1

ment official with intimate knowledge of the workings of the Zagreb embassy. "Arms flowed into Croatia despite the embargo, and this was not an issue. It was never raised. Not once. Now, we're starting to wonder: What have we unleashed in Croatia, and where it is going?"

Several factors have contributed to this new uneasiness about a country that has served until now as the Clinton Administration's pivotal Balkan ally in the search for a balance of power that could open the way to a peace settlement.

To this end, senior officials said, massive Croatian arms imports, in flagrant defiance of the embargo, have been systematically ignored while some of America's top retired generals have been allowed to advise the Croatian Army on modernizing.

Now, however, Croatian human-rights abuses during and since the recapture of the Serbian-held Krajina region in August are troubling the Administration. Apprehension has been growing over Croatian territorial ambitions in Bosnia and over persistent Croatian threats to retake Serbian-held eastern Slavonia.

More generally, an uneasy sense has taken hold among senior officials that America may have allowed itself to get too cozy with a Government whose rhetoric is often laced with thinly veiled racism toward Bosnia's Muslims.

"There are many marriages of convenience in the Balkans, and our relationship with Croatia has been one of them," said a senior Pentagon official. "Let's face it, you can't get to Bosnia without going through Croatia. You need their ports, you need their lines of communication. But right now we're not happy. We see the whole set-up there as overly militaristic."

These concerns have been forcefully conveyed to the Croatian President, Franjo Tudjman, over the last 10 days by the chief American envoy to the Balkans, Richard C. Holbrooke, and by President Clinton himself. Senior officials said the President has raised the threat of economic sanctions against Croatia in the event of an attack on oil-rich eastern Slavonia.

"Let's just say our relationship has entered a cooling-off period," said one senior American diplomat.

But troubling questions remain as the United States tries to recast its relationship with Croatia, especially as the possibility increases that more than 20,000 American peacekeepers will be sent to the region.

They center on whether American advice or intelligence was provided for the campaign in Krajina that resulted in atrocities and the uprooting of more than 170,000 Serbs, how far a tacit alliance with Croatia has gone, and whether an American-led NATO mission to police any settlement is compatible with such close ties to Croatia.

Allowing Croatia to arm itself — it spent an estimated $1 billion on arms in the last year — has been one pillar of America's Balkan policy. The arms, including tanks and M1-24 armored assault helicopters, were acquired mainly in eastern Europe, Croatian officials said.

Croatia became the chief conduit for weapons to the Muslim-led Bosnian Army, but only after taking its cut, about 30 percent of all shipments, Western officials said.

The buildup has been complemented by the efforts of Military Professional Resources Inc., which has been active in Croatia this year.

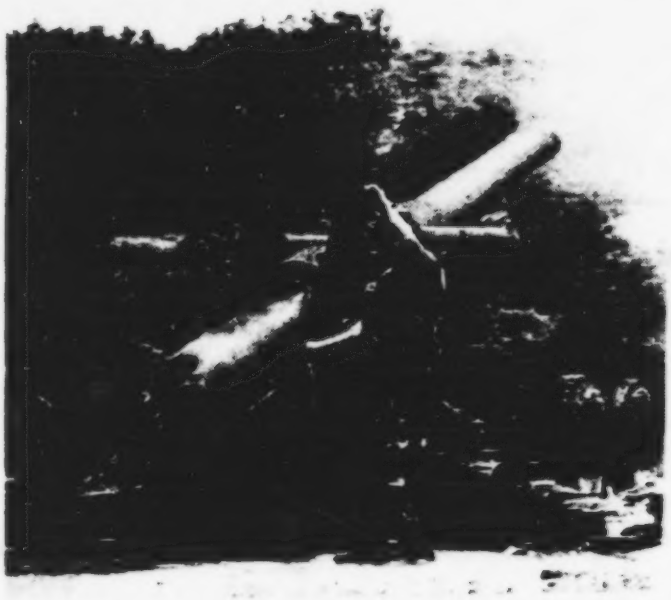
The company occupies one floor of a small, modern building in Alexandria. Conference rooms have names like "the infantry room," where Mr. Soyster greets guests, "the cavalry room," and "the artillery room." A plaque on one wall says: "War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse."

In order to get a license from the State Department, the company had to undertake not to provide direct military planning or advice on strategy to the Croatian Army. This would violate the arms embargo.

Activities were to be limited to courses on leadership, the training of non-commissioned officers, the place of an army in an emergent democracy, and other subjects unrelated to the obsession of the Croatian Army: the fact that, when the mission began, about 30 percent of Croatia was occupied by Serbs.

"It was kind of frustrating," Mr. Soyster said. "No military plans. No strategy. Those were our constraints."

For this mission, the company de-



A Croatian Army artillery unit bombarded Bosnian Serb positions multipronged attack began in August to recapture the Krajina region of (

Consultants build a professional fighting force.

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After Having Winked at the Buildup

Associated Press

just days before the succesaful Croatia from the Serbs.

ployed some extremely high-powered people, including Gen. Carl E. Vuono, who from 1987 to 1992 was the Army chief of staff, and Gen. Crosbie E. Saint, who from 1988 until 1992 was the commander of the United States Army in Europe.

Some idea of the importance accorded the mission by the Croats can be seen in their attendance at a "leadership skills" course. Every Croatian Government minister turned up, and Mr. Soyster said President Tudjman also appeared.

The force behind the American presence was clearly the Defense Minister, Mr. Susak, a brisk and ruthless man obsessed with remaking the Croatian Army in order to fight the Serbs. He became so confident about the arms buildup that he would joke about it with American officials, a State Department official said. The minister did not respond to a request for an interview.

Gen. Anton Tus, chief military adviser to Mr. Tudjman, said: "We are very satisfied by what the American generals have done for our top-level commanders and some lower levels. General Vuono has been helping us get closer to the standards of NATO. However, it is wrong to believe that he or other American officers have given any specific, operative military instructions for our campaigns."

But the nature of the attack on the Krajina, dubbed "Uluja" or "Storm," has led many Western military analysts to believe that American planning and advice played a role.

The lightning five-pronged offensive, integrating air power, artillery and rapid infantry movements, and relying on speed and intense maneuvers to unhinge Serbian command and control networks, bore many hallmarks of American army doctrine.

An American officer working for United Nations forces called the attack a textbook campaign. He said, "It was carried out on an unsophisticated level, but for me the evidence of American instruction was unmistakable. You don't just stumble on what the Croats have achieved."

Mr. Soyster, who declined to disclose the value of the multi-year contract with the Croatian Government, denied that there had been infringement of the arms embargo. "The guys who run this company ran the American Army, and we are not going to do anything that is against United States policy" he said.

However, a Croatian liaison officer who handled contacts between the two generals and the Croatian army told Roman Majetic, a widely respected journalist in Croatia, that in the five days before the offensive at least 10 meetings were held between General Vuono and senior officers involved in the Krajina campaign. This account could not be independently confirmed.

"According to this officer, there were a series of computer simulations," Mr. Majetic said. "These were not instructions but scenarios. It was pitched at the theoretical level, but it turned out to be true. What General Vuono and General Saint hypothesized was more or less what happened in reality during the Krajina offensive."

General Tus said: "It may be people came to that conclusion because of speed and strategy. I am not saying that these meetings did not take place. I'm just saying that I'm not aware of it. It is true that General Vuono was in the country at that time."

Mr. Soyster confirmed that General Vuono and General Saint were in Zagreb in the days leading up to the Krajina offensive, and they met with Mr. Susak and with the chief of the general staff of the Croatian Army. "But there was absolutely no wargaming," he added. "We were not even aware the attack was about to happen."

But it is clear that the officer class of the Croatian Army, particularly at the non-commissioned level, has gone through a radical transformation guided by retired American officers and that this has helped create the most potent military force in the area. Only four percent of Croatia is now in Serbian hands, and the Croatian Army has taken more than 20 percent of Bosnia.

Having helped in various ways to create this force, the United States is now concerned that it be contained. In the past there have been differences with the Ambassador here asking for a stronger warning against attacking the Krajina than the White House chose to deliver. But now the burning of 70 percent of the Serbian homes in the southern Krajina, the executions of dozens of aged Serbs, and the eviction of thousands more

A de facto ally is now a source of American concern.

have made the Administration as a whole uneasy.

"You'd have to say we gave the green light for the Krajina offensive because our admonitions were at best half-hearted," said Charles Thomas, who retired recently after working on Muslim-Croat federation affairs for the State Department. "But now we're worried by the Croatian military ascendancy. The balance between Muslims and Croats is too weighted to the Croats. It's skewed."

Mr. Soyster said the atrocities during the Krajina offensive were "a major area of concern." But he added that the courses were continuing.

The next target would clearly be eastern Slavonia. Last week Mr. Tudjman said the army would invade if the region were not returned by the end of November.

The Clinton Administration, switching signals, has told the Croats that it is determined to stop any attack. But the American United Nations officer said: "With the money they have spent, and the training they have received, the Croatian Army is one that's going places. It is definitely not an army on the verge of demobilization."

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Annex II

BOSNIAN MUSLIMS CONTINUE TO ARM THEMSELVES, SAYS BRITISH TV

Bosnian Muslims are still secretly arming themselves, despite a United Nations arms ban and the peace process, and with the knowledge and help of the United Nations and the U.S., a British independent television channel said on Friday. A British Channel 4 reporter said he had seen classified reports purporting to show that Muslims in the former Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina had during the summer acquired military equipment and high-tech weaponry, mainly anti-tank and anti-aircraft systems.

The weapons arrived mostly via Tuzla airport in central Bosnia, which is officially under United Nations control but, according to Channel 4, a part of it is totally controlled by the Muslim Army and closed to United Nations peacekeepers. Muslim troops kept the weapons mostly hidden at home, and some of it was stored at the airport in tents meant for the refugees.

The clandestine arms deliveries were made with the knowledge of the United Nations and Washington, and intelligence reports indicate that the U.S. and NATO were directly involved in them during the summer.

The British Television Channel further said that the secret arms deliveries had begun in February 1995, which had been spoken of in public but that they had been intensified in the past five months.

The Bosnian Serbs, too, knew about the deliveries, which is evident from a report from a meeting between the United Nations Force Commander in Bosnia, British Gen. Rupert Smith, and (Bosnian Serb State) Republika Srpska Army Commander Gen. Ratko Mladic.

U.S. State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns, speaking for Channel 4, denied the Administration's involvement in the matter, but allowed for the possibility that the Muslims had been secretly buying arms, including U.S.-made equipment on the black market. If a peace accord is reached, the U.S. will very soon unilaterally lift the arms ban (imposed by the United Nations on arms sales to all of former Yugoslavia) and openly arm the Bosnian Muslims, Burns said.